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Internal Displaced Persons and Their Information Needs

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Abstract:

This study aims at establishing the information needs of internal displacement persons (IDPs) amongst us. The quantitative and evaluative research design was adopted for this study. The census sampling technique was used in selecting most affected local governments in Borno camps. Simple random technique was used in selecting most affected five local governments out of 20 local government's utmost affected by insurgency in Borno State, Nigeria. Four objectives were set for the study and the interview was used for gathering data from respondents. As of the time of collecting data for this study, five local governments that were seriously affected among twenty local governments conquered by insurgency are: Ngala, Dikwa, Bama, Damboa, and Chibok. Finding shown that (64%) were female while (36%) were male. Findings also reveals that the information needs of IDPs include security (100%), health information (98%), foods/family and relationship (95%), new/current happening (93%), finance(91%), life decision (90%), property (74%), shelter (67%), among others. Use of information to relocate their family (99%) topped the list of the use of information by the IDPs.

The majority of the respondents found IDPs camps condition inadequate (85%). Factors affecting information seeking behaviour of the IDPs include, lack of fund (97%), irregular medical care (95%), lack of accommodation (94%), lack of food (92%), poor living condition (87%), exposure to violence/abuse (86%), corruptions (74%), government policies(60%), sexual abuse(50%), among others. The paper concludes that State and Federal Government should take into consideration the IDPs information needs amongst us, thereby provide adequate funding, shelters, foods, proper health care and security. Recommendations were put forward to enhance access to information by the IDPs and ensure their safety wherever they are.

Keywords: Information needs, Internal displacement persons (IDPs), Insurgency, Borno camps

Introduction

Borno State is a state in north-eastern Nigeria. Its capital is Maiduguri. The state was formed in 1976 from the split of the North-Eastern State. Until 1991 it contained what is now Yobe State. Borno has 27 local governments such as: Askira/Uba, Bama, Bayo, Biu, Chibok, Damboa, Dikwa, Abadam, Gubio, Guzamala, Gwoza, Hawul, Jere, Kaga, Kala/Balge, Konduga, Kukawa, Kwayakusar, Mafa, Magumeri, Maiduguri, Marte, Mobbar, Monguno, Ngala, Nganzai, and Shani. The Borno state government has revealed that terrorist group; Boko Haram controls 20 out of the 27 local government areas in Borno state over the last five years. Besides, The Nation, February, (2016), reports that, only Maiduguri Metropolitan, Jere, Konduga, Kaga, Bayo, Kwayakusar and Biu local government areas remain in government hands. Therefore, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), North-East Coordinator of the agency, said this in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Tuesday, (2016) in Maiduguri reported that, 16 of the camps were located in Maiduguri, while 16 were cited in some local government areas. He said the number of displaced persons in the camps in Maiduguri ranged from 120, 000 to 130, 000 “We still have 32 camps in the state; 16 of the camps are in Maiduguri, while 16 others are in the local government areas, which we call satellite camps. “The number of IDPs in the 16 camps in Maiduguri fluctuates between 120,000 and 130,000; sometimes it is 120,000, sometimes it is less depending on the situation,” According to him. He said the number of IDPs in satellite camps was 400,000, adding that no fewer than 1.2 million IDPs were also staying with relatives in the communities. He emphasised that the agency had been striving hard to provide welfare for the IDPs wherever they were located. A total of 1,934,765 displaced persons, IDPs, are currently living in formal camps, host communities and satellite camps in liberated communities as a result of insurgency in North Eastern States of Borno, Yobe, Taraba, Gombe, Bauchi and Adamawa states. This was disclosed by the Yola Camp Coordinator, Saad Bello, who, on behalf of the Director General of NEMA, Muhammad Sani Sidi, took the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Power, round the facilities at Malkohi IDP Camp in Yola, Adamawa State at the weekend. He said there were 32 formal camps in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States with a total of 189,783 IDPs. Borno has 19 camps with 150, 858 IDPs; Yobe has 9 camps with 31, 988 IDPs and Adamawa 4 camps with 6,

937 IDPs. The Camp Coordinator added that there were 14 satellite camps in liberated communities, mainly in Borno State with 216,184 IDPs. The camps with the highest population are Ngala with 70,505; Dikwa 53,636; Bama 27, 000, Damboa/Sabon Gari 25,311 and Chibok; 37,798. Mr Saad said host communities in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states have a total of 1,391,613 IDPs. Borno state has the highest with 1, 158, 362; Adamawa 125, 689 and Yobe 107, 562.

Therefore, Nigeria has been battling helplessly with insurgency perpetrated by the Boko Haram terrorist group. Boko Haram is predominant in the North Eastern part of Nigeria in states like Borno, Yobe and Adamawa. They have in the last half a decade or so, become the most dangerous insurgent group that Nigerians have witnessed. Their central philosophy is “Western education is forbidden”. They are known to devastatingly attack churches, mosques, schools, police stations and government, private and public owned facilities with a kind of guerrilla warfare tactics. The hazardous undertakings of Boko Haram insurgency have generated a huge upsurge of displacement in the North Eastern part of Nigeria. Internally displaced person’s plight is more worrying and hazardous in Nigeria. Over the years, the growing number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Nigeria is becoming alarming www.venturesafrica.com/the-numberof-internally-displaced-person. According to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-Moon (2014), Displacement remains arguably the most significant humanitarian challenge facing the world of the 33.3 million IDPs in the world; Sub-Saharan Africa hosts 15 million, with an increase of 7.5% between 2013 and 2014. Therefore, this study is concerning about internal displacement persons in Nigeria with special interest on Borno camp.

Statement of the Problem

The activity of the much dreaded Boko Haram sect has tampered with the peace and harmony of Nigeria as a nation and Borno in particular. The victims of war, battle, clash or conflict are not just those who die in the battle, those who live to tell the story live with pains and memories that may never make them remain the same again. Above and beyond, the displaced persons at the camps have seen a lighter shade of death with the hardship and sufferings they have endured in recent times. Some of them are lost and have no suspicion of the where about of their loved ones. Living in the IDP camp is enough reason for them to be unhappy and upset when they used to be

major business owners and land owners. This study, however, intends to find out the information needs of the IDPs at Maiduguri camps in Borno State. It is against this backdrop, that these studies evaluate information needs of the IDPs, to what use the IDPs put the information they obtained, and what is the condition of the IDPs camps in Maiduguri as well as what are the challenges that IDPs encounter in information seeking.? These are the questions to which this study intends to answers.

Objectives of the Study

This study sought to establish ways of enhancing the information- seeking behaviour of the IDPs. To attain this goal, the study specified the following objectives:

- To ascertain their information needs of the IDPs
- To know the use they put the information obtained.
- To examine the condition of the IDPs camps
- To establish the problems that the IDPs encounter in information seeking

Research Questions

For the purpose of this research, the following questions have been formulated:

- What are the information needs of the IDPs in the camp?
- To what use the IDPs put the information they obtained?
- What is the condition of the IDPs camps in Borno?
- What are the challenges that IDPs encounter in information seeking?

Literature Review

Uncountable peoples have lost their life, exposed to different abuse; abandon their homes, property and their family in Nigeria and worldwide in the face of Boko haram, political disorder, civil conflict, natural or economic disasters, or other threats. As they do not cross an international border, they are considered as ‘internally displaced persons’ (IDPs) not refugees. World Food Programme, (2000) reports that, Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs) face special difficulties related to violence and abuse, especially in areas of continuing conflict. Collaborating World Food Programme (WFP, 2000), governments have become more responsive in acknowledging their primary responsibility for protecting and assisting affected populations under their control.

According to a Norwegian Refugee Council (2017) report that, “Displaced people face a number of hardships, including lack of access to water, healthcare, shelter, education and a basic income. www.venturesafrica.com/the-numberof-internally-displaced-person reported that, internally displaced persons, upon safe arrival at their new but temporary location, have basic needs such as reasonable shelter, food, potable water, healthcare, education, security, clothing, information, etc. which must be met in order to stay alive and inhibit social-cultural and security consequences both on themselves and host communities alike. Crisp, (2012), Fitzpatrick (2002) and Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) affirmed the current status and obstacle facing IDPs in Nigeria recorded that as at 2013, 3.3 million people were displaced in Nigeria essentially as a result of insurgency.

More so, Amnesty International (2010) estimates that at least 17,000 people have been killed since Boko Haram escalated its insurgency in northern Nigeria in 2009. Sequel to intermittent Boko Haram attacks on Borno towns, villages (Gwoza, Damboa, Askira Uba, Damboa and Chibok), Adamawa (Madagali, Mubi, Gulak, Basa, Shua, and Michika), and Yobe and pockets of communal violence in parts of Taraba, Plateau states, millions of Nigerians have fled their homes and manage to eke out a living in IDP Camps. Figures released by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), an offshoot of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), an independent, non-governmental humanitarian organization as of April 2015, “estimated that about 1,538,982 people that fled their homes in Nigeria were still living in internal displacement camps scattered across Nigeria. In its ‘Global Overview 2014 report’, the Internal Displaced Monitoring Centre (IDMC) posited that Nigeria has Africa’s highest number of persons displaced by conflict, ranking behind Syria and Colombia. The aforesaid figure comprises people displaced as a result of fierce attacks by Boko Haram militants in north-eastern Nigeria, the government-led counter-insurgency operations against the group, sporadic inter-communal clashes and natural hazard-induced disasters” and also includes the additional 47, 276 IDPs in Plateau, Nasarawa, Abuja (FCT), Kano and Kaduna which was collated by Nigeria’s National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) in February 2015 and International Organization for Migration/NEMA, February 2015).

The vast majority of IDPs identified in the above mentioned states have been displaced because of the insurgency (91.98%), a smaller number was forced to leave their place of origin because of community clashes (79.6%) or natural disaster (0.06%). IDMC in Borno documented that,

24.2% of the population was displaced in 2015 following the increase in violence in this state since the beginning of the year. (87%) of IDPs live with host communities and (13%) live in camps or camp-like settings. The situation in other states are quite different, while there are no identified camps in Yobe, Bauchi and Gombe, (12%) of the IDP population in Adamawa and (18%) of IDPs in Borno live in camps or camp-like setting. A large number of IDPs in north east Nigeria live with relatives and friends to survived.

Olagunju (2006) emphasized that, Nigeria, particularly, has been finding it increasingly difficult and is almost failing in its task to manage its plethora of IDPs. Obviously, the phenomenon of internal displacement is not new to Nigeria and their neighborhoods. It is on the increase. Similarly, National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), reports that from July to October, 2012, a total of 2.1 million residents were sacked by flood in Nigeria. Between January, 2013 and February, 2014, about 470,565 and 143,164 persons were displaced in Nigeria by internal conflicts and natural disasters, respectively, and Internal Displacement cuts across 24 states of the federation. Also, Falobi (2014) affirmed that, between January and March, 2014, insurgency caused the displacement of about 250,000 persons in the northern part of the country alone. Supportive to a 2014 estimate of the Geneva based Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), there are approximately 33.3 million displaced persons (excluding development-induced displacement) across the world, half of which are found in Africa. Crisp (2010), suggests that about 15 million people are internally displaced in Africa, and 9 of the 24 countries with the highest rate of displacement are African. In other words, Africa is the continent with the largest number of IDPs in the world.

Furthermore, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre interview with Norwegian Refugee Council, (2013) stated that, Women and children remain the most vulnerable to sexual and gender based violence. There have been reported instances of rape, sexual harassment, forced marriage, infant marriage, sexual diseases and uncontrolled birth occasioning high infant and maternal mortality in make-shift IDP camps in Nigeria. The needs of children are highly disregarded in armed conflict situations and this is the case in Nigeria. Children are being exposed to enhanced risk of abuse, forceful conscription by insurgents as child soldiers, suicide bombers, sex slaves and abrupt discontinuation with their education. Their live changes towards a different direction of malnutrition, inadequate amenities needed for their survival. More, so

United Nations Children's Fund, (2012), confirmed that, a rapid child protection assessment carried out in November 2012 found that sexual violence against children was on the rise, with cases of their being offered as prostitutes in exchange for food. Boys were also at risk of being forcibly recruited by armed groups. A lack of organized camp management makes abuses easier to perpetrate. According to NEMA, most of the school age children in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe have had their opportunities for schooling severely constrained. The destruction of schools and indiscriminate killing of students and teachers by Boko Haram insurgents has left many schools deserted and deprived children of their right to education.

Nevertheless, Satellite imagery obtained by Human Rights Watch (2013) after the April military offensive in Baga, Borno state, revealed that more than 2,200 homes had been destroyed, mainly by fire. Therefore, most IDPs in Nigeria flee to neighboring communities that are relatively safe, usually taking refuge in temporary shelters such as public buildings, schools, and places of worship among others; having been deprived of their homes and sometimes their land and livelihoods (Olukolajo, 2014). Collaborating, Olukolajo (2014), revealed that most IDPs have reportedly preferred to seek shelter with relatives rather than living in camps. The vast majority of displaced persons in Nigeria reportedly seek refuge with family, friends or host communities in areas where their ethnic or religious group is in majority.

Therefore, majority of the respondents interviewed affirmed that, internal displaced persons (IDPs) are facing a numbers of challenges such as government policies, sexual abuse, and irregular medical care, bad terrain, and insufficient food, lack of fund poor living condition, corruption and exposure to violence among others. Similarly, www.globalprotectioncluster.org affirmed that abduction, sexual slavery, forced recruitment and other major violation of human rights have affected thousands of women, children and their families at the IDPs camps.

Equally, Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, (1999), stated that, the majority of these children suffer from some level of malnutrition for example, in Turbo (Antioquia Department), (68%) of displaced children in displaced camps are malnourished. Likewise, Human Rights Watch, (1998), children suffer the most serious effects of minimal and irregular medical care: (80%) of IDP children do not receive social security or vaccination coverage; for displaced children under 5 this is (20%) below the national average. More so, Olagunju (2006) has keenly observed the use of untrained workers by IDPs management agencies contributed to some of the challenges faced by the (IDPs). Similarly,

According to IDPs in Nigeria, daily times, (2016), research shows that (62%) of the IDPs populations in sites are female while (38%) are male. Furthermore, Lomo (2000) noted that staff members of many institutions, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, are not sufficiently competent to implement existing provisions for protecting the constituencies for whom they are responsible. The majority of the respondents opined that where fund is lacking, standard facilities will be unavailable and the agencies will be inefficient. This is directly linkable to the position of Olagunju (2006), that government in Nigeria does not have adequate machinery in place to address IDPs issues and the organizations created by the government possess minimal capacity to handle IDPs related problems. Collaborating Olagunju (2006), who found out that government aid such as money/relief gets diverted and never gets to the IDPs themselves, equally traced corrupt practices to camp officials and leaders of IDPs who may also convert and sell commodities provided for IDPs thereby contravening principle 24(2) of the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.<http://www.internal-displacement.org/sub-saharan-africa/nigeria>.

Methodology

This study adopted quantitative and evaluative research design. Data for the study were obtained from primary and secondary sources. The instrument used for data collection in this study was a structured interview; documents and questionnaire were relied upon. Five local governments that were seriously affected among others camps were selected for the study: Such as Ngala, Dikwa, Bama, Damboa, and Chibok constituted the study area which the help of three research assistants internal displacement monitoring centre who were trained on how to distribute the questionnaires across the Internally Displaced Persons in the most affected camps in Borno, Nigeria. The study population comprised IDPs, males and females of eighteen years and above who have been displaced and have found themselves in the chosen five local governments mention above. Two sets of questionnaire were administered to the selected five local governments sample population. Of the 500 copies of questionnaire administered to the IDPs at Ngala, Dikwa Bama, Damboa and Chibok local government. 372 were retrieved 51 of which were found invalid while 321 were found valid for analysis, thus, there was 86.2% response rate.

Research Finding and Discussion.

Figure 1: Gender distribution of the respondents

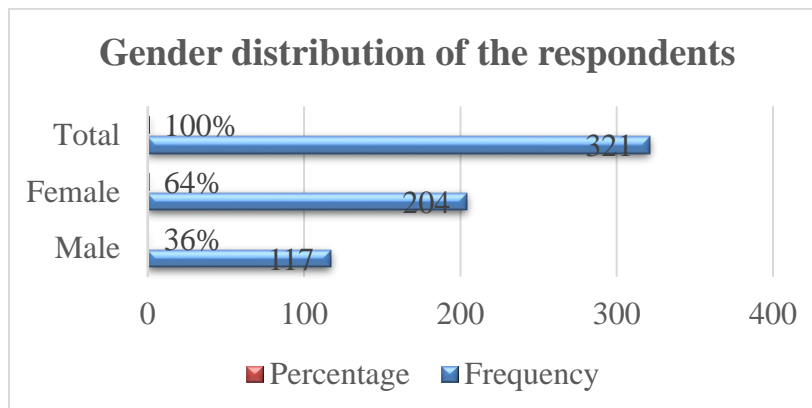
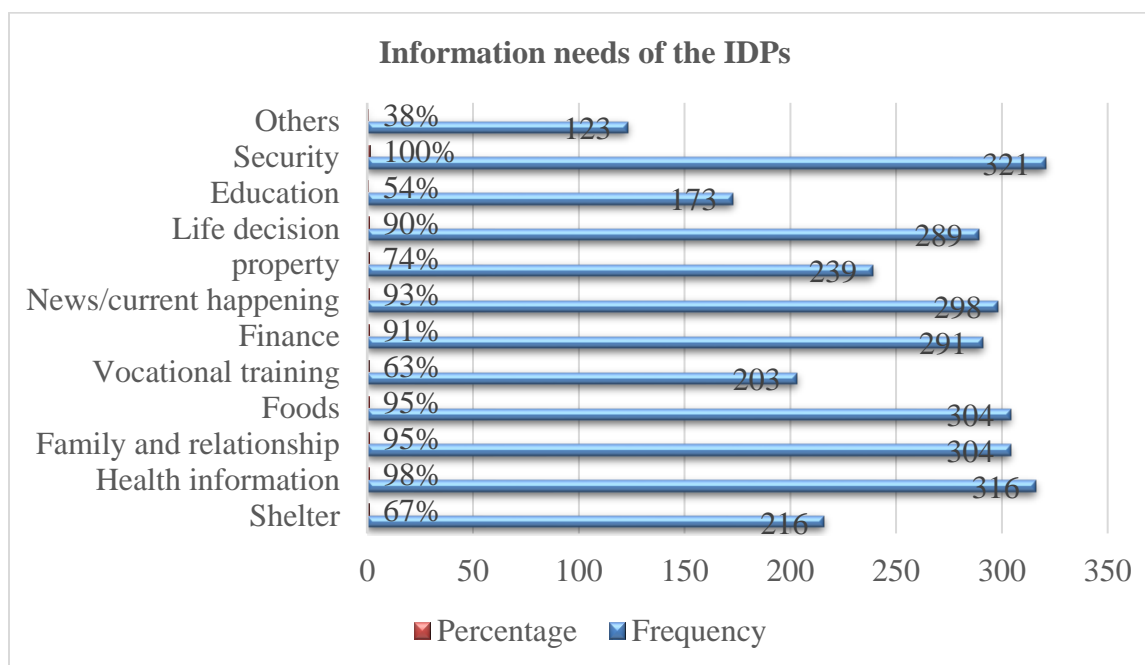


Fig. 1, shows that (64%) of the respondents were female while (36%) were male. This represents the gender distribution of IDPs involved in the survey. There are more female IDPs in Borno camps than their male counterparts. This is in consonance with the finding of daily times, (2016), research shows that 62% of the IDP populations in sites are female while 38% are male.

Figure 2: Information needs of IDPs



As indicated in **Fig. 2,** 100% of respondent's security information, 98% health information, 95% foods/family and relationship, 93% new/current happening, 91% finance, 90% life decision, 74% property, 67% shelter, 54% education, 38% others. This is in agreement with reports of

www.venturesafrica.com/the-numberof-internally-displaced-person internally displaced persons, upon safe arrival at their new but temporary location, have basic needs such as reasonable shelter, food, potable water, healthcare, education, security, clothing, information, etc. which must be met in order to stay alive and inhibit social-cultural and security consequences both on themselves and host communities alike.

Figure 3: Use of information by IDPs

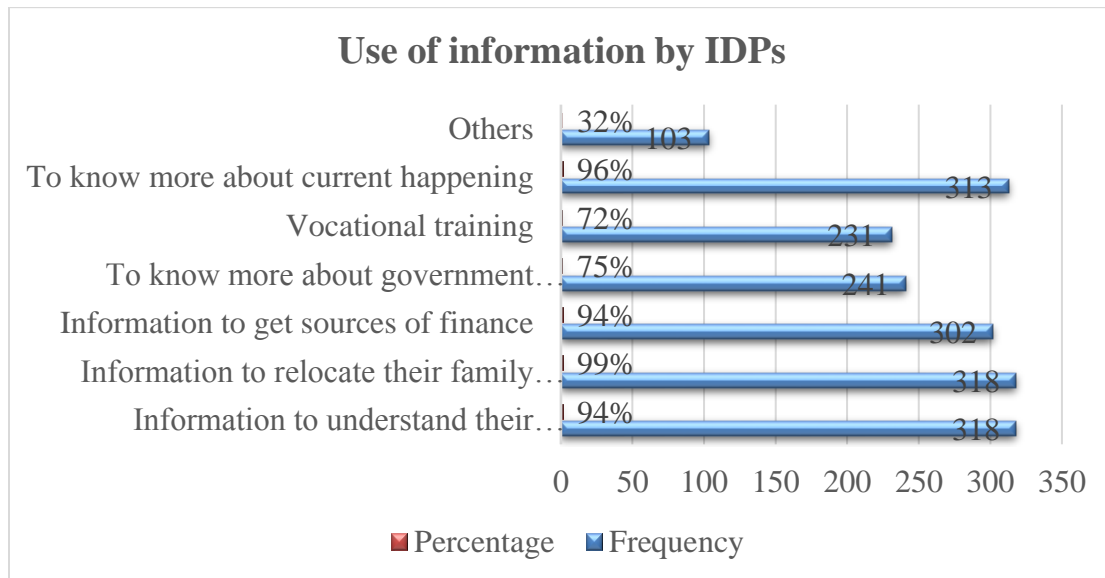


Fig. 3, revealed that 99% used information to relocate their family, 96% to know more about current happening, 94% use information to understand their health better/ information to get sources of finance, 75% to know more about government policy, 72% vocational training, 32% others.

Figure 4: Camp condition

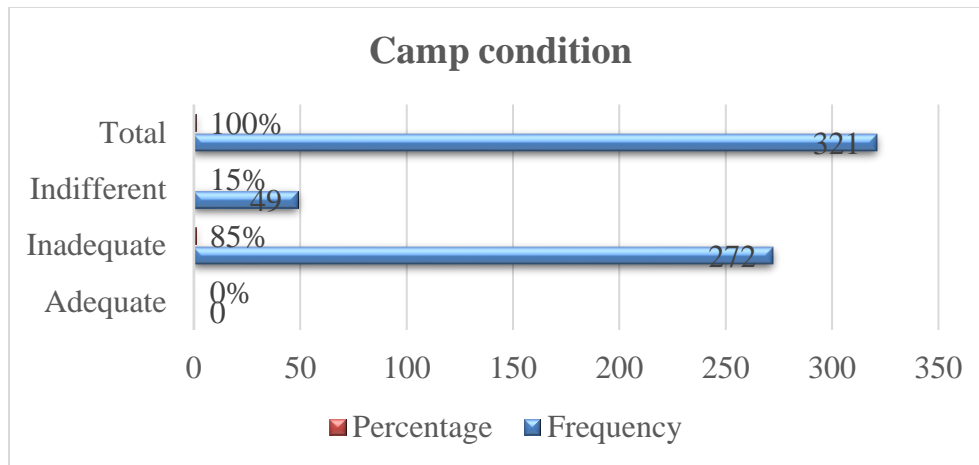
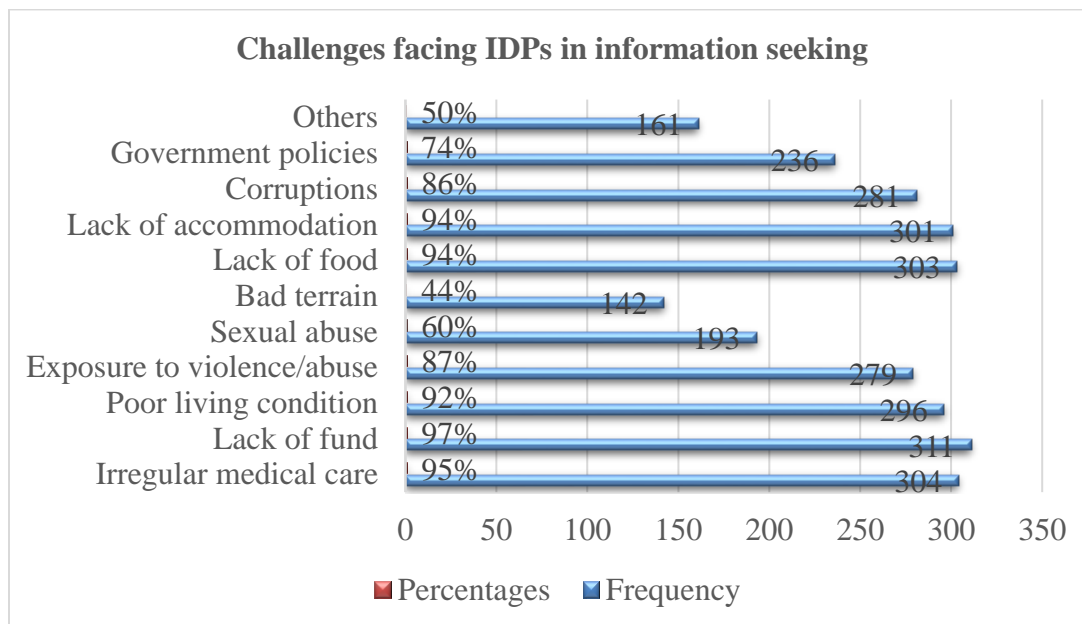


Fig. 4 shows that majority 85% of respondents found IDPs camps condition inadequate for meeting their needs, 15% % remained indifferent in their opinion and No one found the camps condition adequate. This is alongside with finding of Olagunju (2006), that government in Nigeria does not have adequate machinery in place to address IDPs issues and the organizations created by the government possess minimal capacity to handle IDPs related problems.

Figure 5: Challenges that IDPs encounter in information seeking.



From **Fig 5**, it is clear that the factors affecting the IDPs information seeking behavior is problem of lack of fund 97%, 95% irregular medical care, 94% lack of accommodation/ lack of food, 92% poor living condition, 87% exposure to violence/abuse, 86% corruptions, 74% government

policies, 60% sexual abuse, 50% among others. This is in line with the findings of Human Rights Watch, (1998), children suffer the most serious effects of minimal and irregular medical care: (80%) of IDP children do not receive social security or vaccination coverage; More so, Olagunju (2006) has keenly observed the use of untrained workers by IDPs management agencies contributed to some of the challenges faced by the IDPs. Similarly, Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, (1999), confirmed that, malnutrition, respiratory illnesses, diarrhoea, parasitic diseases and sexually transmitted diseases are indicators of the extreme fragility of IDP living conditions.

Conclusion

Lastly, this writer appeals internally displaced person, Boko Haram victims, political disorder, civil conflict, natural or economic disasters, or other threats and people from North-East particularly and Nigeria at large to soldier on, be strong and security cognizant. As they say, tough times don't last but tough people do. No matter how long it takes, light will victory over darkness. This too, will certainly come to pass. In view of the above, the following recommendations are made:

- Government should ensure that necessary facility, first aid treatment and urgent medical treatment should never be denied to any internal displacement persons, regardless of the camps.
- To make funds available for the management of IDPs in Nigeria governments should solicit for donations and financial aids from more international bodies. They should also collaborate with more international humanitarian organizations for assistant.
- The Nigerian government should fight corruption and ensure a direct link between the management agencies and the IDPs. The role of intermediary played by government agencies such as NEMA and SEMA should be discouraged, and in fact, discontinued
- The budgetary allocation for IDPs should be separated from allocation for disaster and/or emergency since not all disasters and emergencies result in displacement. If this is done, there is a high likelihood of more financial concentration and commitment to IDPs situation in the country.
- More counsellors and intellectual health professionals trained to work with (IDPs) in camps. (IDPs) in particular, traumatized internal displaced persons, to help them settle into normal life.

- Government and non-government organizations in charge of the (IDPs) should pay close attention to the security information need, sex abuse, health information need, education information need, vocational training, and provision of food and ensure their safety in the camps among others.
- Information sources from the governmental and non-governmental sources should be reliable enough so that (IDPs) will not be misled in their decisions.
- The paper recommends that policy maker's attention should be drawn to such areas as the political, economic and technological provision of the (IDPs) so as to safeguard and enhance their stay in their host camps.

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